

Norwalk Easter Public Library
Norwalk, Iowa
Strategic Plan 2013 – 2018

Approved July 8, 2013 by the Library Board of Trustees

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

I am pleased to present the 2013 – 2018 Strategic Plan for the Norwalk Easter Public Library. This is an aspirational, yet realistic, plan that will serve as an exciting impetus for our future.

The Strategic Plan will be a dynamic tool for the Library Board of Trustees and Library Director to utilize in making public policy and strategic decisions. In light of our ever-evolving environment which is driven by new and emerging technologies, and the shifts of the ever-growing community we serve, this plan is designed to continue to position the Library as a relevant public service organization. The plan will also help create and support opportunities for us to respond to the growing needs and expectations of our customers.

The library recognizes the importance of being aligned with the community's Comprehensive Plan, which is designed to promote growth and development for the Norwalk area community. Additionally, the Library reaffirms our commitment to public service and to providing quality services the public needs and desires.

I would like to thank the Library's Board of Trustees, Staff and Community members that gave their time to this project. I would like to especially thank Maryann Mori from Iowa Library Services for her guidance and input. I look forward to the next five years and serving the Norwalk Easter Public Library community.

Sincerely,

Holly Sealine, Library Director Norwalk Easter Public Library

OVERVIEW

The Norwalk Public Library opened in March 1962 in space at back of the Norwalk Pharmacy. The first books were donated by people in the community, and eventually a budget was established to purchase new items. In 1965, the library moved to a portion of the original city hall building and operated on a budget of \$11,840. As the Norwalk community continued to grow, the library found that it needed even more space and eventually moved in 1979 to a small building, now known as Little Hands Big Dreams Daycare, where it remained until 1998. Under the leadership of the Library Board of Trustees and through community support and donations the library moved to its current location at 1051 North Avenue and the name was officially changed to Norwalk Easter Public Library (NEPL). In August 2011, the Library Board of Trustees hired Holly (Karlen) Sealine to continue directing the Norwalk Easter Public Library into the future. As we recognize, the previous 51 years have seen much growth; therefore to continue to position a successful library for the future, it is important to develop a strategic plan that complements the Community's vision and plans. The following plan was developed in collaboration with community members by the Library Board, Library Staff and Director Sealine to share our vision and proposed strategy for moving forward during the next five years.

Our desire is for the NEPL to have a strong customer focus by strengthening the library's role in supporting educational and learning opportunities; fostering stronger community connections; and increasing public awareness of the library's print and digital resources and our services. This strategic plan also includes internal strategies to improve working relationships among all library stakeholders by creating a culture of trust and accountability.

Therefore, for this 2013 to 2018 Strategic Plan, NEPL has revised our Mission Statement, which is:

To create a welcoming environment that provides equal access to information, materials and services for people of all ages

Why is this necessary?

Libraries across the country are in a time of change and reinvention; therefore this plan does not seek to predict but to prepare and position the NEPL to adapt to changing conditions and meet the needs of our customers in the Information Age. The NEPL Board of Trustees and staff embrace the opportunity to redirect library services and resources to positively impact the lives of our community members.

Who are we serving?

Norwalk and surrounding communities anticipate a continued increase in population. According to the 2010 U.S. Census report, Norwalk grew by approximately 30% during the past 10 years and expects to grow by an additional 30% by 2020 according to the Norwalk Comprehensive Plan. The mean age for Norwalk residents is 34; however, over 30% of the population is under 18 years old. Thirty-two percent (32%) of the 25 and older population have at least a bachelor's degree. All of this data indicates that the Norwalk community is comprised of many young, professional families.

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

This strategic plan was developed with input from NEPL staff, community members and the Library Board of Trustees. We utilized the Planning for Results program developed by the Public Library Association (PLA) with facilitation from Iowa Library Services. Through this planning process, visions provided by each group began to merge with a common focus upon a city where civic involvement includes community pride, community gathering, and community sharing.

Visions provided by the NEPL community focus groups

- Children will see positive examples of community involvement;
- Teens will have a meeting place and opportunities for volunteer/work activities;
- Adults of all ages will have multiple and varied opportunities, including jobs, housing, family-friendly activities and environments;
- Seniors will have access to affordable housing, as well as a meeting place and opportunities for volunteer activities; and
- Businesses will have active local support and partnership in serving the marketplace.

The NEPL Vision

Based on a strong and consistent message that Norwalk and the surrounding area want a community center that can provide varied opportunities to persons of all ages, the NEPL staff and Board of Trustees identified four areas for the library to focus on during the next five years.

Those four areas are:

Knowing our community: Supplying Resources and Services

Library visitors will have a central source for information for a wide variety of programs, services, and activities provided by NEPL, community agencies, and other organizations.

Creating a Comfortable Place: Providing Physical and Virtual Spaces

Library visitors will have safe and welcoming physical places to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read. They will also have open and accessible virtual spaces that support networking.

Satisfying Curiosity: Supplying Lifelong Learning

Library visitors will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.

Empowering Stakeholders: Providing Continuing Education

Library stakeholders will develop a commitment to the Library's mission and shared values with effective communication, training, and resources throughout the organization.

At the end of five years and as a result of our intense focus and our involved community, we envision that NEPL will:

- base all service decisions on customer needs and preferences;
- be recognized as a premier resource for educational support, self-directed learning, and literacy;
- provide invaluable tools for building the community's prosperity;
- respond with creativity and innovation to community challenges;
- be a welcoming community gathering place and cornerstone for family, cultural, and civic life; and
- be a forward-thinking organization that maximizes the potential of each employee and patron.

MISSION, CORE VALUES, AND FOCUS AREAS

Mission

To create a welcoming environment that provides equal access to information, materials and services for people of all ages

Core Values

- Service NEPL creates a welcoming environment that serves everyone with excellence and efficiency;
- Community NEPL provides opportunities for people to meet, exchange ideas, and participate in the life of our community;
- Learning NEPL nourishes the mind with ideas and experiences; and
- Innovation NEPL adapts to change and plans for the future.

Focus Areas

Knowing our community: Supplying Resources and Services

Library visitors will have a central source for information for a wide variety of programs, services, and activities provided by NEPL, community agencies, and other organizations.

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KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY: COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Library visitors will have a central source for information for a wide variety of programs, services, and activities provided by NEPL, community agencies, and other organizations.

❖ **Goal 1:** Local preschools and educational agencies will receive outreach programming to encourage literacies and a positive relationship with the library.

To meet this goal, the library will...

- Evaluate current outreach program and determine areas for improvement.
 - Responsibility: Youth Services Librarian
- Grow the current preschool outreach program to reach more of the Norwalk preschools.
 Responsibility: Youth Services Librarian
- Increase the number of contacts with Norwalk preschools.
 - Responsibility: Youth Services Librarian
- Increase number of contacts with additional outside sources such as area homeschool groups and private schools.
 - Responsibility: Youth Services Librarian
- ❖ Goal 2: Residents of Norwalk and the surrounding communities will have access to a civic focal point and resource hub.

To meet this goal, the library will...

- Provide accurate information about government services.
 - Responsibility: Library Staff, Library Director
- Provide connection points for our most vulnerable community members with information and services that improve their quality of life.
 - Responsibility: Library Staff, Library Director
- Create an electronic resource within the library to share events of community interest.
 Responsibility: Library Director, Library Board of Trustees
- Provide access to information and current events, health, finance, how-to-topics, etc. and the staff to answer those questions or find the information.
 - Responsibility: Library Director, Library Staff, Library Board of Trustees
- ❖ **Goal 3:** Residents of Norwalk and the surrounding communities will find spaces and services to support community growth.

To meet this goal, the library will...

- Charge library staff to become the go-to contacts for well-rounded, current information.
 Responsibility: Library Director, Library Staff
- Develop resources and services to reflect the personality and needs of the community that we serve.

Responsibility: Library Director, Youth Services Librarian, Adult Services Coordinator

- Re-shape our policies and practices to maximize patron access to library resources.
 Responsibility: Library Director, Library Board of Trustees
- Employ creative space planning to make Library building flexible and responsive to community priorities and needs.

Responsibility: Library Director, Library Board of Trustees

- Actively recruit new library volunteers.
 - Responsibility: Library Director, Friends of the Library, Library Board of Trustees
- Collaborate with other community agencies, organizations and individuals to inform and coordinate common goals and efforts.

Responsibility: Library Director, Library Board of Trustees

- Collaborate with partners to provide high-demand public services.
 Responsibility: Library Director, Youth Services Librarian, Adult Services Coordinator
- Evaluate most efficient and effective method of publicizing library programs, services, and news.

Responsibility: Library Director, Youth Services Librarian, Adult Services Coordinator

- » After an initial assessment in 2014, outreach to local preschools and educational agencies will increase by 1% each year.
- » By the end of fiscal year 2015, visitors to the Norwalk Easter Public Library will find an electronic resource within the library to share events of community interest.
- » Yearly, library personnel will evaluate and/or develop resources and services to reflect the personality and needs of the community that we serve.
- » All policies and procedures will be reviewed on a 2-year cycle after an initial review by the end of fiscal year 2014.
- » The library will identify one new collaborative partner each year during the next five years, while still maintaining current collaborative partners.

Creating a Comfortable Place: Providing Physical and Virtual Spaces

Library visitors will have safe and welcoming physical places to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read. They will also have open and accessible virtual spaces that support networking.

❖ Goal 1: Residents of Norwalk and the surrounding communities will have welcoming physical places to meet and interact with others and to participate in programs of current and continuing interests.

To meet this goal, the library will...

 Perform an annual assessment of the furnishings, grounds, and equipment to maximize space usage, comfort and convenience and make upgrades and changes as necessary with available resources.

Responsibility: Library Director

 Regularly check to make sure that library materials are clean, attractive, and shelved correctly.

Responsibility: Library Staff, Library Director

Provide a building that is clean and well maintained.

Responsibility: Library Director, Library Staff, Buildings and Maintenance

Provide a comfortable and welcoming community gathering space.

Responsibility: Library Director

Promote the availability of the library meeting room.

Responsibility: Library Staff, Library Director

Provide adequate amount of computers as well as Wi-Fi work areas.

Responsibility: Library Director, Library Board of Trustees

Evaluate exterior and interior signage and make changes as needed.

Responsibility: Library Director

Provide comfortable seating throughout the library.

Responsibility: Library Director

Inventory storage space and plan for future storage needs.

Responsibility: Library Director

 Evaluate Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance with existing guidelines and forthcoming revisions. Correct deficiencies.

Responsibility: Library Director, Library Board of Trustees

❖ Goal 2: Residents of Norwalk and the surrounding communities will have access to electronic resources, databases and emerging technologies to help them keep up with technology trends, and a welcoming virtual space to gather information pertinent to their lives.

To meet this goal, the library will...

Investigate website enhancements and implement recommendations.

Responsibility: Library Director

Maintain current information on the NEPL Web site.

Responsibility: Library Staff, Library Director

Investigate improvements to online catalog.

Responsibility: Library Director

Implement online social networking opportunities – blogging, wikis, etc.

Responsibility: Library Staff, Library Director

 Provide electronic resources and databases that are current and relevant to community needs.

Responsibility: Library Director

 Develop website links, bookmarks, lists, and other materials on reader's advisory services.

Responsibility: Library Staff, Library Director

Create and maintain a list of possible training opportunities in the community.
 Responsibility: Library Staff, Library Director

- » Visitors to the Norwalk Easter Public Library will increase by 5% each year.
- » People attending programming offered by Norwalk Easter Public Library will increase by 5% each year.
- » Programming opportunities will increase to include a minimum of 2 programs per age group each month (age groups include: babies, kids, teens, adults).
- » The number of uses of the library's patron access computers will increase by 2% each year.
- » The number of uses of the library's electronic resources will increase by 2% each year.
- » Beginning in FY14, on a two-year cycle, a minimum of 75% of patrons surveyed will indicate that the library is a safe, welcoming place to visit.
- » Beginning in FY14, on a two-year cycle, a minimum of 75% of patrons surveyed will indicate that the library website is easy or very easy to use.

SATISFYING CURIOSITY: SUPPLYING LIFELONG LEARNING

Library visitors will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.

❖ **Goal 1:** Residents of Norwalk and the surrounding communities will have equitable access to library collections, services, and free high-quality programs to support personal growth, explore topics of personal interest, continue to learn, and transform their lives.

To meet this goal, the library will...

 Create learning opportunities with public, private, and nonprofit partners that maximize library and community resources.

Responsibility: Youth Services Library, Adult Services Coordinator, Library Director

Investigate options to offer lecture series, or how-to-classes.
 Responsibility: Youth Services Library, Adult Services Coordinator, Library Director

 Plan and implement a program to promote library use by new residents of the community.

Responsibility: Adult Services Coordinator, Library Director

 Provide library programs on a variety of topics that appeal to the curiosity and learning interests of the public.

Responsibility: Library Director, Youth Services Librarian, Adult Services Coordinator

 Develop a "Satisfy your curiosity" web page with links to topics of interest to various age groups in the community including interactive features.

Responsibility: Library Staff, Library Director

Promote the availability of electronic resources.

Responsibility: Library Director, Youth Services Librarian, Library Staff

Ensure customers have the skills to find, evaluate and use information.

Responsibility: Library Director, Youth Services Librarian, Library Staff

Develop parallel programming for adults and children on similar topics of interests.
 Responsibility: Library Director, Youth Services Librarian, Adult Services Coordinator

 Develop intergenerational programming that inspires people to share stories across ages.

Responsibility: Youth Services Library, Adult Services Coordinator, Library Director

 Establish the Library as a resource for practical information on commonly shared life challenges such as parenting, personal finances, education, health, etc.

Responsibility: Adult Services Coordinator, Library Director

Develop online survey to identify lifelong learning interests of community.

Responsibility: Library Director

 Transform the Library into a learning lab where anyone can experiment with new technologies.

Responsibility: Library Director, Library Board of Trustees

Continue to promote and expand the outreach program for elderly and homebound customers.

Responsibility: Library Director, Library Staff, Library Volunteers

Goal 2: Residents of Norwalk and surrounding communities will be encouraged to build community around resources.

To meet this goal, the library will...

Maintain an up-to-date collection through a program of annual culling, replacement and development.

Responsibility: Library Director, Youth Services Librarian

 Create book displays and/or display items created by local residents or items from personal collections highlighting topical interests.

Responsibility: Library Staff, Library Volunteers

 Expand our reader's advisory service to publicize library materials and assist readers in finding materials to check out.

Responsibility: Library Director, Youth Services Librarian

 Provide print and non-print nonfiction collections that appeal to the curiosity and learning interests of the public.

Responsibility: Library Director, Youth Services Librarian

 Provide more ways for people to join conversations about books and culture. Responsibility: Library Staff, Library Director

Stimulate the mind by promoting reading, viewing and listening for pleasure. Responsibility: Library Staff, Library Director

 Goal 3: Parents/Guardians, caregivers, and preschools will have collections, programs, services, and spaces designed to promote early literacy skills, library use, and creativity.

To meet this goal, the library will...

Develop an early literacy program geared toward ages 0-2 to foster early literacy development and support parents as a child's first teacher.

Responsibility: Youth Services Librarian

 Evaluate current early literacy programs utilizing the Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR) principles and develop strategies and standards for programming that serves children, parents and care providers.

Responsibility: Youth Services Librarian

 Utilize the ECRR materials to provide specialized service to children, their parents and care providers.

Responsibility: Youth Services Librarian

Provide early literacy information to parents and care providers.

Responsibility: Youth Services Librarian, Library Volunteers

- Expand the children's services area of the web page to provide more links, information, and resources for early childhood literacy and parenting.
 - Responsibility: Youth Services Librarian
- Expand NEPL's services to parents and families by partnering with local health care agencies.

Responsibility: Youth Services Librarian

❖ Goal 4: Children of all ages, from school-age children through teenagers, and their families and caregivers will have collections, programs, services, and spaces designed to encourage reading, library use, and creativity.

To meet this goal, the library will...

- Promote information literacy skills which are defined as finding and using information; nurture a lifelong love of learning; and aid the transition from child to adult.
 Responsibility: Youth Services Librarian, Library Staff
- Establish increased usability of the juvenile and young adult nonfiction sections in both print and non-print resources.

Responsibility: Youth Services Librarian

 Provide current and vital print and non-print collections for school-age children and their caregivers.

Responsibility: Youth Services Librarian

 Investigate and implement best practices for serving targeted populations, such as lowincome families, homeschool families and teens.

Responsibility: Youth Services Librarian

Provide displays of nonfiction materials throughout the year.

Responsibility: Youth Services Librarian, Library Staff

- Promoting nonfiction materials during library programming Responsibility: Youth Services Librarian, Library Staff
- Provide reviews of nonfiction selections in the library newsletter or website.
 Responsibility: Youth Services Librarian, Library Staff
- Provide passive programming (activity sheets, trivia sheets, do-it-yourself crafts, at-home reading programs, scavenger hunts, etc.) both at the library and online.
 Responsibility: Youth Services Librarian
- Investigate and implement online resources, such as readers advisory, chat, or email reference and provide an online presence typical for this age (for example social networking sites).

Responsibility: Youth Services Librarian, Library Director

 Update staff training in the areas of school-age collection development, readers' advisory and online resources.

Responsibility: Library Director, Youth Services Librarian

- Explore the possibility of offering an after-school outreach program in conjunction with Norwalk schools.
 - Responsibility: Youth Services Librarian, Library Director
- Ensure every teacher and school administrator is aware of the Library's ability to provide students with homework assistance, access to technology, and diverse collections.
 Responsibility: Youth Services Librarian, Library Director
- Goal 5: Teens will be provided with collaborative opportunities, resources, and materials to support their transition to confident and responsible adulthood.

To meet this goal, the library will...

- Continue to expand both print and non-print materials of high interest to teens.
 Responsibility: Youth Services Librarian
- Design and implement multiple monthly teen programming opportunities.
 Responsibility: Youth Services Librarian
- Expand the volunteer program to include teens on a regular basis.
 Responsibility: Youth Services Librarian
- Design and develop the teen portion of the website to be more user-friendly and include more resources designed for teens.

Responsibility: Youth Services Librarian

- » Overall circulation of materials (adult, children, and young adult) will increase by 5% each year.
- The number of displays/exhibits will increase by 10%.
- » Reference questions researched and answered will increase by 2% each year.
- » The number of preschool children attending storytimes will increase by 2% each year.
- » The number of school-age children attending library programs will increase by 2% each year.
- The number of teens attending library programs will increase 3% each year.
- At least 10 teens will serve as library volunteers on an annual basis.
- » Beginning in FY14, on a two-year cycle, a minimum of 75% of responding parents and caregivers will indicate that they are aware of early literacy resources and programs available at the library.
- » Beginning in FY14, on a two-year cycle, a minimum of 80% of responding patrons will indicate that the availability of materials which supports their interests is very good or excellent.
- » After the initial survey, customers who say the content of library programs meets their learning needs will increase.
- » Beginning in FY14, on a two-year cycle, a minimum of 75% responding patrons will indicate that they were able to find a new program or resource that fit into a topic of interest.
- » Beginning in FY14, on a two-year cycle, a minimum of 70% of responding parents, teachers, and students will indicate that they are aware of recreational and educational resources and programs available at the library.

EMPOWERING STAKEHOLDERS: PROVIDING CONTINUING EDUCATION

Library stakeholders will develop a commitment to the Library's mission and shared values with effective communication, training, and resources throughout the organization.

Goal 1: Library employees will receive comprehensive training and professional development to increase employee job satisfaction, performance and retention.

To meet this goal, the library will...

Develop and implement new employee training process.

Responsibility: Library Director

Increase learning opportunities and interactions between all staff members.

Responsibility: Library Director

Train all staff to be effective promoters of Library resources and services.

Responsibility: Library Director

Capitalize on available certification and training resources – for example Iowa Library Services, webinars, etc.

Responsibility: Library Director, Library Staff

Standardize all basic training requirements—for example, Alexandria, processing materials, cash handling, etc.

Responsibility: Library Director

Develop and implement an annual training plan.

Responsibility: Library Director

Cross-train to enhance employee skills and address staffing shortfalls.

Responsibility: Library Director

 Develop a staff recognition program that will reward employees who demonstrate exemplary levels of service and professional development.

Responsibility: Library Director

❖ Goal 2: Library employees will receive clear, concise guidelines.

To meet this goal, the library will...

Review job titles, job descriptions, roles, responsibilities, and organizational structure. Responsibility: Library Director, Library Board of Trustees

Assess staffing needs for all job classifications.

Responsibility: Library Director, Library Board of Trustees

Update, revise and distribute Library policies and procedures.

Responsibility: Library Director, Library Board of Trustees

Conduct periodic surveys to assess effectiveness of internal communication.

Responsibility: Library Director

Maintain an organizational structure that optimizes the effectiveness of NEPL. Responsibility: Library Director

 Identify and implement resources that will allow for better and more effective communication.

Responsibility: Library Director

Goal 3: Library stakeholders will be encouraged to be innovative, take initiative, and will be recognized for excellence

To meet this goal, the library will...

 Establish effective channels for staff and the public to communicate experiences and insights about ways to improve service.

Responsibility: Library Director

• Promote employee retention and loyalty to the Library by acknowledging significant events in staff members' lives.

Responsibility: Library Director

 Promote the active participation of stakeholders at all levels in identifying trends and new and better ways of serving library users.

Responsibility: Library Director, Library Board of Trustees, Friends of the Library

 Actively experiment to better serve library customers, implementing successful pilot projects more widely over time, and communicating lessons of both successful and failed innovations.

Responsibility: Library Director, Youth Services Librarian, Library Staff

 Create a tech-savvy environment where all staff keeps pace with advances in the world of information services.

Responsibility: Library Director

 Reinforce message that NEPL values innovation by recognizing efforts and celebrating success.

Responsibility: Library Director

❖ Goal 4: Library stakeholders will receive training, resources, and knowledge of how to actively support the initiatives of Norwalk Easter Public Library

To meet this goal, the library will...

- Make library stakeholders in the community aware of the importance and impact of helpful and knowledgeable library staff and the necessity of supporting ongoing training.
 Responsibility: Library Director, Library Board of Trustees
- Provide opportunities for community residents to become involved in a meaningful way within the library community.

Responsibility: Library Director

- Offer training resources for library stakeholders on a variety of library-specific topics.
 Responsibility: Library Director
- Annually evaluate goals and initiatives, and make library stakeholders aware of how they can continue to support the library in meeting those goals and initiatives.
 Responsibility: Library Director, Library Board of Trustees

- » After an initial survey, library employee satisfaction will increase annually until it reaches 100%.
- 100% of library employees will be trained on duties associated with job description.
- 100% of library employees will know job expectations.
- » An annual evaluation will be completed of our strategic plan and will identify areas still needing to be addressed.
- » Stakeholders will be given an annual report of the library's accomplishments, which will include resources or ideas of how stakeholders can continue to support NEPL's goals.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Norwalk Easter Public Library would like to express its appreciation to the following people, whose contributions have made this strategic plan possible.

FACILITATION

Maryann Mori, Iowa Library Services Consultant

LIBRARY STAFF

Holly Sealine, Library Director Annette Clark, Youth Services Librarian Deb Hobbs, Library Assistant Mary Kay Johnson, Adult Service Coordinator Amanda Leichty, Library Assistant Eric Racz, Library Assistant Amy Rollinger, Library Assistant Byron Smith, Library Assistant Kathy Spencer, Library Assistant Debbie Todey, Library Assistant Karen Vasher, Library Assistant Arnita Waugh, Library Assistant Jeanne Wheeler, Library Assistant

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NORWALK EASTER PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF

TRUSTEES

Tom Dunn, President Diana Duffy, Secretary Andrea Johnson, Treasurer Laura Greiner Dyann Vilez Jordyn Hill Donna Kitterman **Judy Corcoran**

RESOURCES

Planning for Results San Antonio Strategic Plan Ames Public Library Orange City Public Library Norwalk Comprehensive Plan Seattle Public Library Strategic Plan U.S. Census